

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-20 INR-10 NSC-07 CIAE-00 DRC-01

RSC-01 /065 W

----- 107732

R 041415Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5304

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 0406

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MT

SUBJ: STATE OF MINTOFF'S HEALTH

REF: VALLETTA 0398

1. ALTHOUGH BULLETINS ISSUED BY MINTOFF'S DOCTORS AND DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION HAVE CLAIMED THAT MINTOFF IS PROGRESSING NORMALLY AFTER HIS ACCIDENT OF FEBRUARY 22, THERE ARE SOME INDICATIONS THAT HIS INJURIES WERE MORE SERIOUS THAN HAVE BEEN ADMITTED. IT IS SOMEWHAT CURIOUS, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT A FULL WEEK PASSED BEFORE ANNOUNCEMENT MARCH 1 THAT ANTON BUTTIGIEG, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE, HAD BEEN APPOINTED ACTING PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER.

2. RUMORS HAVE BEEN NUMEROUS, E.G., THAT HIS POLITICAL ENEMIES HAD FINALLY GOTTEN TO HIM, AND THAT HE HAD BEEN FLOWN TO LONDON FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT.

3. ONE VERSION OF MINTOFF'S CONDITION WAS PROVIDED TO US BY SISTER-LIN-LAW OF ALBERT AGIUS FERRANTE, SENIOR CIVIL SERVANT IN PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, WHO ASSERTS SHE GOT IT DIRECTLY FROM HIM. SHE CLAIMS THAT MINTOFF DID SUSTAIN SLIGHT SKULL FRACTURE AND CONCUSSION AS WELL AS EXTENSIVE LACERATIONS. SHE ALSO CLAIMED HE IS THREATENED WITH LOSS OF ONE EYE WHICH WAS BADLY
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DAMAGED BY GRAVEL WHEN HE WAS THROWN FROM HIS HORSE. SHE ALSO

CLAIMED THAT MINTOFF WAS TRYING TO CONDUCT HIS BUSINESS FROM HOSPITAL BED AND THAT ONLY ON FEBRUARY 28 DID HE FINALLY AGREE TO GIVE THIS UP. THIS LATTER POINT WOULD FIT IN WITH MARCH 1 ANNOUNCEMENT OF BUTTIGIEG'S ACTING ROLE, AND IS CONSISTENT WITH BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER'S REPORT THAT GOVERNOR GENERAL ON FEBRUARY 27 TOLD HIM MINTOFF AT THAT TIME WAS STILL SIGNING PAPERS.

4. WHATEVER THE FACTS, IT IS CLEAR THAT MINTOFF HAD A SERIOUS ACCIDENT, AND THAT HE IS DOING HIS BEST TO KEEP THE PRECISE FACTS UNCLEARED FOR THE PRESENT.GETZ

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRIME MINISTER, MEDICAL CARE, HEALTH
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974VALLET00406
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: VALLETTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740369/aaaacmfj.tel
Line Count: 72
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: VALLETTA 0398
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 MAY 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <27 JAN 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STATE OF MINTOFF'S HEALTH
TAGS: PINT, MT, (MINTOFF, DOMINIC)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005